Racism in Novels and in Life

Course: 8th Grade English/Language Arts

Goals for Unit
Broad goal: Students will look at the characters in literature in order to understand racism. My goal is that they will see racism in the characters in the novel they've been assigned and then to be able to discuss racism in literature as well as racism in the world they live in.

Guiding Questions
1. How can a reader interpret whether or not a character is racist?
2. What makes a person racist?
3. Who experiences racism in the world today?
4. How might the world change?

Objectives for Unit
(F=formative assessment in assignment #) (S=assessed in summative assessment)
Students will
1. Analyze their current ideas on racism in their lives. F 1, S
2. The students will discuss difficult questions that will tie into their books. F 2, 4, 5, 11, 12
3. The students will analyze the covers and titles of their books. F 2
4. The students will predict what will come in the book using what they determined from the covers. F 2
5. Students will identify the setting of their novel. F 3
6. Students will infer why the author chose that particular setting for the novel. F 3
7. Students will analyze the techniques the author uses to reveal aspects of a character’s personality. F 4, S
8. Students will compare and contrast themselves to the main character. F 4, S
9. Students will recognize figurative language in their novels. F 5
10. Students will breakdown the figurative language to understand the meaning. F 5
11. Students will analyze the racism in the Hughes poems. F 6
12. Students will compare racism in one source to the racism in their own novels. F 6, S
13. Students will analyze point of view in their novels. F 7
14. Students will determine why the author chose the point of view that he or she did. F 7
15. Students will analyze how stereotypes positively or negatively affected the characters in their novels. F 8, S
16. Students will summarize the plot of their novel. F 9
17. Students will compare the characters at the end of the novels to the way they were at the beginning. F 10, S
18. Students will determine how the characters have changed throughout the novel. F 10, S
19. Students will determine the theme of their novel. F 11
20. Students will defend the theme of their novel. F 11
21. Students will use textual evidence to defend their position. F 3, 5, 6, S
22. Students will write logically using proper syntax and grammar. F 1-11, S

**Iowa Core Standards**

Reading Standards

1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL.8.1.) (DOK 1,2,3)
2. Employ the full range of research-based comprehension strategies, including making connections, determining importance, questioning, visualizing, making inferences, summarizing, and monitoring for comprehension. (DOK 2,3)
3. Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (DOK 1)

Writing Standards

1. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.8.4.) (DOK 3,4)
2. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.8.10.) (DOK 1,2,3,4)

Speaking and Listening Standards

1. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
2. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. (SL.8.1.) (DOK 1,2,3)

**Students background, previous knowledge, and skills**

This is an 8th grade class with 24 students. There are 12 males and 12 female. 9 students are in Special Education, 1 student has a 504 plan, 3 have behavioral disabilities and 1 is hearing impaired. I have a full-time special education co-teacher.

This year, the students have just finished a unit on the horror genre. In that unit, they worked hard on citing textual evidence, understanding the elements of a story, and comprehending what they read. They have learned of plot, conflict, and figurative language in previous years. This unit will build on that knowledge.

The writing and speaking standards are very similar to the previous years. This year, the focus is preparing the students for high school level speaking and writing. To accomplish this, this unit will focus on the students refining their skills in these areas.

**Lessons**

It is assumed that the teacher has access to an Elmo and a projector. The students are expected to have a 3-ring binder, blank paper, the novel they are reading, and they each have a Chromebook computer for their personal use.

**Day 1: 45 minutes**
Topic: To introduce this unit, we will view book trailers of the novels we are going to be reading. The novels are *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers, and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (from now on referred to as, *Part-Time Indian*) by Sherman Alexie. The students will keep a journal in this unit. The teacher will introduce the journal in this class. The students will journal their thoughts to a question posed by the teacher in the form of an exit slip.

Objectives: Students will analyze what racism looks like in their lives.

Materials: The book trailers for all three books.
*To Kill a Mockingbird* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VETGYkLFfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VETGYkLFfw)
*Part-Time Indian* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQMyOkvbu7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQMyOkvbu7A)
*Monster* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2tKzK4B8-o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2tKzK4B8-o)

Activities: I will begin the unit by having a short discussion on race. All three of these novels deal with race in very different ways. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a historic book based in the past in the middle of an unjust murder trial of a black man. *Monster* is also a murder trial of a black man, but it is set in present day. *Part-Time Indian* is also set in the present day, but it follows a Native American teen who travels to an all-white high school to get a better education.

1. The discussion on the history of racism will be a short one. I do not want myself to do the talking on racism in this unit. The novels speak for themselves in this race. 5-10 minutes
2. Then we will view all three book trailers. 10-15 minutes
3. Students will rank their choices for novels. 5 minutes
4. I will introduce the journaling activities the students are required to do this unit. They will have a journal question everyday they will have to answer fully before they leave. The students will have about 7 minutes every day to answer their question. 5 minutes
5. Their first journal entry is the question, “What does racism look like in your own life? Have you or anyone you know experienced racism?” 10 minutes

Teaching Strategies: The book trailers will give the students an idea of what each book contains. This will enable them to make an informed decision on what book to read. Allowing the students to have choice in what book they want to read makes them feel like they have a real say in their education. One down-side to this is the reading levels of the books. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the most difficult book, and I will try to have my upper readers assigned to this one. This may mean pulling aside a couple of my strong readers and encouraging them to tackle this book.

Assessment: The students’ journals and rankings of books will serve as the assessment for this lesson.

Adaptions: For my student who is hearing impaired, I will give the links of the book trailers to his translator before class so the translator can be prepared to translate for the student.
Day 2: 45 minutes

Topic: Today I will hand out the students’ books. We will also be meeting in our book clubs for the first time today. In these clubs, they will be discussing some questions to prepare them for the book they are about to read. I will allow for time to read the book, and we will end class with our journal question.

Objectives: The students will discuss difficult questions that will tie into their books. The students will analyze the covers and titles of their books. The students will predict what will come in the book using what they determined from the covers.

Materials: I will hand out the books to each student today. I will need enough for each student.

Activities: I will begin class by assigning the books to the students. After that, I will assign the book clubs that the students will discuss the book with in the coming weeks.
1. I will assign books and book clubs for the students. The book clubs will have no more than 5 students in it. 5 minutes
2. Once the students get in their book clubs, I will give them several questions to discuss amongst themselves. 20 minutes
3. For Part-Time Indian, the questions are,
   a. What happens when a person leaves their home environment in pursuit of success? Do they give up or betray their identities? Is it true that “you can never go home again”?
   b. How do we, as humans overcome adversity? What tactics do we use to get through hard times?
4. For To Kill a Mockingbird, the questions are,
   a. What was the purpose of Jim Crow laws? How did it affect African Americans in the South?
   b. Is the court system in the United States really fair? If you are innocent, do you really have nothing to fear of the justice system?
5. For Monster, the questions are,
   a. Is everyone truly innocent until proven guilty?
   b. Are you guilty if you know something about a crime but stay silent? What if you assist in the crime?
6. The students will begin reading their novels silently to themselves for the last half of class. 15 minutes
7. The journal question for today is, “Think about the title and cover of your book. What does this indicate about what is inside? Consider words ‘monster,’ ‘part-time,’ and ‘absolutely true.’ Also think about what is a mockingbird, or rather, who is?”

Teaching Strategies: These book clubs will allow the students to discuss the books they are reading with their peers. This will increase their confidence to speak in groups of their peers. It will have them become familiar with speaking in groups like this. The students will be reading the book silently in class. They will take it home if they cannot finish it in class.
Assessment: I will use the journals as assessment. I will also be walking among the book clubs as they are discussing their questions.

Adaptions: The teaching strategies above should help all students with disabilities. If I get into a situation where one student is not talking in the book clubs, I will start assigning roles so everyone has to contribute. However, I don’t want to do that because I want these discussions to be natural.

**Day 3: 45 minutes**

**Topic:** Today we will discuss settings. Because the students are reading three different novels, I will start with a broad, mini lesson on setting then let them find their own setting of the novel.

**Objectives:** Students will identify the setting of their novel. Students will infer why the author chose that particular setting for the novel.

**Materials:** I will need a handout of my graphic organizer for each of my students.

**Activities:**
1. The Bell ringer for the day will be on the board when the students walk in. “What is your favorite movie? Where does that movie take place? Why does this place work for that movie?” We will Think-Pair-Share. 5 minutes
2. Here I will do a mini lesson on setting. Setting is the time and place of a novel. I will use examples from works we have already read to make this definition more concrete. For example, the setting in *The Tell-Tale Heart* is the man’s apartment in the past. Students will have to give evidence of the setting. For example, in *The Tell-Tale Heart*, they have lanterns instead of electricity so we know it’s in the past. 20 minutes
3. The students will fill out a graphic organizer for the setting of their novels. The organizer is a triangle organizer with a side for time, place, and mood, which is another facet of setting. Inside the triangle is the entire setting. 10 minutes
4. When finished with their graphic organizer, students can silently read their novels. 10 minutes
5. The journal question for today is, “What is the setting of your novel? Why do you think the author chose that particular setting?” 5 minutes

**Teaching Strategies:** The mini lesson will give the students the background they need to understand setting. Tying it into works we have already read will give them the framework to understand it. The graphic organizer makes the idea of setting more concrete.

**Assessment:** The graphic organizer will show if they understand the setting of the novel, and the journal will show if they understand *why* the author chose that particular setting.
Adaptions: The graphic organizer should help my students with learning disabilities to better understand setting. I will also provide a print out of the notes for those students.

**Day 4: 45 minutes**

Topic: Characterization

Full lesson plan template

**Day 5: 45 minutes**

Topic: Today we will be looking at figurative language in the novels. Authors use figurative language to convey meaning that cannot otherwise be expressed in written language. All three of these novels use figurative language extensively.

Objectives: Students will recognize figurative language in their novels. Students will breakdown the figurative language to understand the meaning.

Materials: Presentation on figurative language.

Activities: To begin, I will have a bell ringer on the board. It will be the chorus of a popular song with figurative language in it. “Chandelier” by Sia works nicely for this. Then I will give a quick presentation on figurative language. The students will get a chance to meet with their book clubs today. They will have a number of tasks to go over. They will identify figurative language in their novels and talk about characterization from yesterday.

1. The song “Chandelier” by Sia will be playing as the students come into the room. On the board will be the chorus. “I'm gonna swing from the chandelier, from the chandelier/ I'm gonna live like tomorrow doesn't exist/ Like it doesn't exist/ I'm gonna fly like a bird through the night, feel my tears as they dry/ I'm gonna swing from the chandelier, from the chandelier” I will ask the students to Think-Pair-Share on what they think it means. This will segue nicely into the presentation on figurative language. 5 minutes

2. The teacher will give a presentation with a slideshow on figurative language. We will discuss metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperboles. The teacher will give definitions of each of these as well as examples. 10-15 minutes

3. Now the students will meet in their book clubs to find figurative language in their own novels. Each group will be challenged with the task of finding an example of each of the figurative language types we talked about. After the students do this, they will go over the graphic organizers on characterization they filled out yesterday. 20 minutes

4. With any extra time they may have, the students can read their novels.
5. The journal question/exit slip for today is, “What is the most interesting example of figurative language you found in your novel? What does it mean? Why do you think the author chose this language?”

Teaching Strategies: In this unit, I have not used the lecture format much. I am trying to switch it up. By having the students do multiple activities in a day, they will be less likely to be bored.

Assessment: The journal entry will serve as a formative assessment tool. I will also be walking among the groups listening and asking questions to see if the students understand figurative language.

Adaptions: Students that are slower readers may be falling behind in the reading at this point of the unit. I expect most students to be about halfway through the novel now. At this point in the unit, I will allow and even encourage students to check out their books to bring home so they can finish the novels. I will also provide a study guide for students who are falling behind. This shows them where to be on each day as well as helps them summarize what is happening in their novels.

Day 6: 45 minutes

Topic: Today we will be looking at poems by Langston Hughes. We will be looking at the poems, “I, too, Sing America,” “Open Letter to the South,” and “Black Workers.” We will be discussing racism, discrimination, and overcoming adversity.

Objectives: Students will analyze the racism in the Hughes poems.
Students will compare that racism to the racism in their own novels.

Materials: The three Langston Hughes poems on print outs for the students to use.

Activities: Today, we will be taking a short break from our novels. We will look at the writer, Langston Hughes. Hughes was an African American writer who led the way in the Harlem Renaissance. As a class, we will look at a couple poems by Langston Hughes and the racism he experienced.
1. There will be jazz music from the 1930s and 1940s playing to set the atmosphere for Hughes.
2. The teacher will give a short history of Langston Hughes and the time period in which he lived and worked. 10 minutes
3. We will start by looking at “Black Workers” as a class. It is relatively easy to pick up on the racism in this poem. 5 minutes
4. Next, I will split the class into groups of three. These will not be their book clubs, but random groups. In these groups, students will look at the poems, “Open Letter to the South,” and “I, too, Sing America.” They will have to underline each reference to racism. Because poems are thick with figurative language, the groups will also be using what we learned yesterday about figurative language. They will have to find at least three examples of figurative language in each poem. 15 minutes
5. The students will get the rest of the time to read their novels silently. 20 minutes.
6. The journal entry/exit slip for today is, “Compare and contrast the racism in the Hughes poems we read to that evident in your novel.”

**Teaching Strategies:** It will be nice for the students to change it up a little bit with these poems. Playing the jazz music while they enter the classroom will get them interested in what we are about to learn. I also think it is important to switch up the groups today. It will be nice for the students to get to work with new people for a change.

**Assessment:** I will use the journal entry as assessment. I will also be walking around the groups while they are reading the Hughes poems to see if they are understanding it.

**Adaptions:** Again, I will give the option for students to check out the books to bring home for extra reading if they are feeling behind.

**Day 7: 45 minutes**

**Topic:** In this lesson we will look at point of view. A story can change depending who is telling it. We will look at how point of view can drastically change the way a story is told. Then the students will discuss the point of view of their novels in their book clubs.

**Objectives:** Students will analyze point of view in their novels.
Students will determine why the author chose the point of view that he or she did.

**Materials:** Three story handouts

**Activities:** To teach point of view to my students, I will use very short stories that we can read and discover what point of view they are coming from. I will have an example of 1st person, 2nd person, and 3rd person narratives. *To Kill a Mockingbird, Part-Time Indian,* and *Monster* are all 1st person narratives so we will focus on that.

1. The teacher will start class by having a short presentation with each perspective. 1st person is told by someone in the story through their own viewpoint. Keywords are I, we, us, and me. In 2nd person, the narrator will address the reader directly. Keywords are you and yours. In a 3rd person narrative, the story is told by a narrator not in the story. They are omniscient, or all-knowing. Keywords are he, she, them, and names of people. 10 minutes

2. The teacher will hand out three stories. Each student gets only one story, but there are three options. One story will be told in 1st person narrative, one in 2nd person, and one in 3rd person. I will give the students enough time to read the story, decide what point of view it is in, and underline the evidence that proves which it is. 5-10 minutes
3. We will go over the result as a class deciding which story is in which perspective. 5 minutes
4. The students will get time to read their novel. Most students should be nearing the end of their novels at this time. 20 minutes
5. The journal entry/exit slip for today is, “What is the point of view in your novel? How would your novel have been different if it were in a different perspective?” 5 minutes

Teaching Strategies: We have been doing a lot in groups in this unit. Today, we will stay away from that to allow students to demonstrate they can work on their own as well as in groups. The journal entry requires students to use their higher level thinking skills.

Assessment: The journal will serve as the assessment. I will also be noting the students’ responses to the short story perspective activity.

Adaptations: This lesson should not need too many adaptions. Students that are slow readers may feel pressure to finish their short story very fast in class. I will be sure to allow plenty of time to finish their stories. I will have a copy of each book in the special education teacher’s room so students that go to that class can read their books in there as well.

**Day 8: 45 minutes**

**Topic:** Today we will look at how stereotypes affect the way people are viewed. Stereotypes affect everyone. We will explore this using a variety of activities. Then we will look at how stereotyping affected the characters in their novels.

**Objectives:** Students will analyze how stereotypes positively or negatively affected the characters in their novels.

**Materials:** 4 sheets of blank paper. Tape.

**Activities:** Stereotyping is a major component in these books. Everyone is stereotyped based on what they look like. We will be discussing stereotypes in the students’ lives as well as in the novels they are reading.

1. Begin class with a discussion on stereotypes. Explain how everyone is stereotyped, and it can be either positive or negative. People are stereotyped based on what they look like, the clothes they wear, how they talk, or what groups they belong to. Categorizing people is a natural human instinct, but it can be harmful. 5 minutes
2. I will ask the students to name groups at school that are used to categorize people. I assume ‘jocks’ and ‘brains’ are two groups that come up. I will write the groups on the board as suggestions come up. Then we will narrow it down to 4 groups. Then I will write those final groups on the sheets of paper and tape them to the board. I will ask all the students to come up and write one adjective describing that group on the paper. Students should only write new adjectives. 5-10 minutes
3. I’ll have students look at the lists. Then we will get into book clubs. In the book clubs, I’ll have the students discuss the following questions:
   a. Do these assumptions hold to all the members of these groups?
   b. How do these assumptions affect the members of these groups?
   c. Do these assumptions tell us anything definite about an individual in these groups?
   d. How do these assumptions affect how you interact with a member of these groups? 10 minutes
4. After they discuss these questions, we’ll move on to discussion on stereotyping in the students’ novels. There will be a big question for each novel.
   a. For Part-Time Indian the question, “How do stereotypes affect Junior in his new school? Are all the stereotypes negative? Are some positive?”
   b. For To Kill a Mockingbird, the question is, “What stereotypes has Scout experienced? These stereotypes can be ones she has witnessed happening to others or can be ones that have happened to her.”
   c. For Monster, the question is, “Steve has experienced many stereotypes. How do these stereotypes affect his court case?” 10 minutes
5. After they have discussed these questions, they will get time to read. 10 minutes
6. The journal entry/exit slip for today is, “Have you faced any stereotypes similar to the ones in your novel? Explain why or why not.” 5 minutes

Teaching Strategies: It is beneficial for students to discuss their feelings on stereotypes with their peers. This is a difficult concept, and one that many students may not have had to think about before. Stereotyping people in our school is a good way to make it feel very real.

Assessment: The journal entry and my observations of the group discussions will serve as the assessments.

Adaptions: The adaptions for this lesson are similar to the adaptions for the previous lessons.

Day 9: 45 minutes

Topic: Today we will explore the plot of the students’ novels. The students have learned about plot before so this should be a review for them. We will fill out a graphic organizer for the plot.

Objectives: Students will summarize the plot of their novel.

Materials: Plot graphic organizer.

Activities: Going over plot will be somewhat of a review for the students. They have been learning about plot for years. At the beginning of class, I’ll have a short
bell ringer that will make the students thinking about summarizing. We will briefly review plot before each student will fill out a graphic organizer on their plot.

1. When students arrive, the bell ringer will be on the board. “Briefly summarize your weekend to your neighbor. It should be no more than 3 or 4 sentences.” 5 minutes
2. After the students have shared their summaries, I will introduce the plot day. We will have a mini lesson on plot. In a plot there are many parts including: opening events, problem, rising action, climax, falling action, and closing events. Most novels follow that structure. We will spend the first half of the class reviewing that. 15 minutes
3. Then I will hand out the plot graphic organizer. Students will fill out the graphic organizer for their novels. When they are finished, they will read their novels. They should be nearing the end of their novels. 20 minutes.
4. The journal entry/exit slip for today is, “Briefly summarize the plot of your novel in no more than four sentences.” 5 minutes

Teaching Strategies: The review and graphic organizer will be a good way to refresh the students’ memories on plot. This is not a new concept and will be re-teaching.

Assessment: The graphic organizer and journal entry will serve as assessments.

Adaptions: The graphic organizer will be a good way for students struggling with summaries and plot to understand it more fully. I should not need more adaptions.

Day 10: 45 minutes

Topic: Today we will look at how the characters in the novels have developed over the course of the novel. It may not be immediately obvious to the students that their characters have changed, but they have. We will talk about character development. The students will discuss how certain characters have changed in their novels in the book clubs.

Objectives: Students will compare the characters at the end of the novels to the way they were at the beginning.
Students will determine how the characters have changed throughout the novel.

Materials: Character ID graphic.

Activities: Today we will be looking at character development. Characters grow and change just like regular people. We will be comparing the characters at the beginning of the novel to how they are at the end.
1. The bell ringer for today will be, “How are you different today than you were a year ago?” Students will Think-Pair-Share this. 5 minutes
2. After we get the brain thinking about how people change, we will discuss ways that our characters change. The teacher will pose the idea of
characters changing. Then the students will split into their book clubs. 5 minutes

3. In the book clubs, they will discuss a few questions. How has the main character changed since the start of the book? Where is there evidence of this? Have any of the minor characters changed? How have they changed? Why do you think the author chose to change the character in this particular way? 15 minutes

4. After the book clubs have discussed this, the students will fill out the Character ID sheet on their characters to document how the characters have changed. 20 minutes

5. The journal entry/exit slip for today is, “Compare and contrast the main character now to when you started the book.” 5 minutes

Teaching Strategies: Today I will not lecture at all. They will spend the entire day either in their book clubs or working on their own work. It will be nice to switch it up again.

Assessment: The graphic organizer and the journal entry will serve as the assessment tool.

Adaptions: At this point in the unit, I hope everyone is participating in their book clubs, but if they are not, I will assign roles in the book club.

Day 11: 45 minutes

Topic: Today we will go over the themes of the novels. All of these novels have the theme of racism, but there are other themes as well. We will talk about what a theme is, and pick out a few themes from other pieces of work they have read. Then they will discuss their themes in their book clubs.

Objectives: Students will determine the theme of their novel.
Students will defend the theme of their novel.

Materials: Green Eggs and Ham

Activities: At the beginning of the lesson, we will read a short book to discover the theme of this story. Then we will split into the book clubs to discuss the themes of their individual novels.

1. The teacher will start class by reading Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss aloud. When the book is finish. The students will Think-Pair-Share what they think the theme to the book is. As a class, we will discuss what the theme is. The answer should be close to exploration or trying new things. 15 minutes.

2. Then the students will spend a short period of time thinking about the theme to their own novels. 5 minutes

3. Once they think they have it, they will meet with their book clubs and discuss what they think the themes to their novels are. 10 minutes

4. The rest of the class period will be spent finishing their novels. The student should be finished with their novels by tomorrow. 20 minutes
5. The journal entry/exit slip for today is “Write the theme of your novel. How is this demonstrated?” 5 minutes

Teaching Strategies: Reading Green Eggs and Ham captures the students’ attention because it is a book many students remember from their childhood. They may not have thought about the theme before. That will make the students more excited to look for themes in their own novels.

Assessment: The journal entry will serve as the assessment.

Adaptions: I will provide my hearing impaired student with a hard copy of Green Eggs and Ham so he can follow along while I am reading aloud.

Day 12&13: 90 minutes

Topic: These are the final two days of the unit. We will spend these days going over the summative assessments (described below).

Objectives: Students will demonstrate they understand the summative assessment. Students will work on their summative assessment.

Materials: Requirements for final assessments.

Activities: We will go over the final assessments. Then the students will get the rest of the periods to work on their assessments and finishing up the unit.
1. The teacher will fully explain the two assessments required. The students may ask any questions they have. 15 minutes
2. For the rest of the days, the students will work on their assessments, ask questions, and finish up the unit.

Teaching Strategies: This will be scaffolding. I, along with my co-teacher, will walk among the students helping them with their assessments.

Assessment: The summative assessments will serve as the assessment tools.

Adaptions: I will give students who need it an extension if they can’t finish their novel or do not finish their final assessment in time.

Summative Assessments:
The summative assessment for this unit will be a writing assignment. The students will write a letter as if they were the main character in their novel. As the main character, the students will write explaining how they have experienced racism in their lives. This letter will be to an adult they feel comfortable talking to. In the letter, students should:
• use specific textual evidence that shows how their character has experience racism,
• describe how they felt about this experience,
• how they want to avoid this experience happening again.
Their writing will be assessed on how they used their knowledge of their character to write the letter. They should use the character graphic organizers they filled out on both the character days to do this. The students will also be assessed on their writing skills. I expect work with few syntax and grammatical errors.

The final summative assessment will be a journal portfolio. The students will compile their journal entries from the unit into one cohesive whole. Then they will do a longer journal on the question, “How did race play a part in your novel? How have your ideas on race changed throughout reading this novel? After reading this novel, do you view race in your own life differently?” This summative assessment will depend less on the technical writing of this piece and more of what the students had to say.

**Unit Objectives in Summative Assessment**

1. Analyze their current ideas on racism in their lives. *This will be assessed in the journal portfolio. I expect students to be honest and take a hard look at their lives.*
2. Students will analyze how stereotypes positively or negatively affected the characters in their novels. *This will be assessed in the letter assignment. The students must demonstrate they understand their character and their motives through the language they use in the letter.*
3. Students will use textual evidence to defend their position. *This will be assessed in the letter. The students will use specific instances from the novel to make their point in the letter.*
4. Students will write logically using proper syntax and grammar. *This will be assessed in the letter. They must have knowledge of proper syntax and grammar. I will not be looking at this as much in the journal portfolio. I will be looking at the writing rather than the formality of the writing.*
5. Students will analyze the techniques the author uses to reveal aspects of a character’s personality. *This will be assessed in the letter. Again, this will be revealed through how well the students understand their character. I will be looking at how close the students can get to the character’s voice.*
6. Students will compare racism in one source to the racism in their own novels. *This will be assessed in the journal portfolio. Students will be comparing racism in their novels to that in their own lives.*
7. Students will compare the characters at the end of the novels to the way they were at the beginning. *This will be assessed in the letter. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of characterization in the novel.*
8. Students will determine how the characters have changed throughout the novel. *This will be assessed in the letter. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of characterization in the novel.*

**Adaptions**

For my lower level readers, it may be difficult for them to keep up with the pace of this unit. I will allow them to check out their books so they can read at home as well as in class. I will also get audiobooks of each of the novels. This way, if needed, the students can listen to the novels rather than reading them if they get very behind.

For my student with a hearing impairment, I will be sure to keep his translator in the loop. The translator may need to prepare for the lesson, and it would be detrimental to the student if his translator did not have time to prepare.
I will also have a special ed. co-teacher in my room. She will be great in the form of scaffolding to students in the special ed. spectrum. Students that need additional help can seek it from either me or her.

The final assessment may be difficult for students as well. In my RTI time, we will focus on the final assessment. Any student that feels they need additional help can come to me at that time, and I will assist them one-on-one then.

Reflection

I will rely heavily on the students’ journals to see how they are processing racism. This is a very difficult topic especially for students from a predominantly white culture. I hope exposing them to race in these novels will help them broaden their world view. The journal responses will tell me if they are going in the direction I would like them to.

The summative assessment will be a way to assess the students writing in a way that is not so formal. We just finished with our horror genre unit in which we wrote a difficult literary analysis. The letter form of writing will hit most of the same major points as the literary analysis, but in a new way. This way, students will not get too bored of formal writing. They can still get the practice they need using textual evidence, but in a new way.

The data collected from this unit will affect how I move forward in the year. For example, I will use the data to see if we hit the standards we need to hit. We have hit textual evidence really hard in the last two units. If the data reveals that they understand this standard, I will move on to the next standard.

References


The romance novel industry found itself facing a similar crisis over racism and representation as Hollywood, or the news industry, or the Democratic party. But one thing that sets it apart is that it is facing this challenge as an industry dominated by women — specifically, white women. Kianna Alexander lives in a modest home south of Raleigh, North Carolina. Across the street, her neighbors have a set of Confederate flags on display, and when she walks around her rural neighborhood, Alexander tries to remember always to bring her ID, to prove, if anyone questions her, that she actually lives there. Alexander told me that she had once been very involved with the Heart of Carolina Romance Writers group but, during the 2016 election campaign, that had changed. Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their color, ethnicity or national origin. People often associate racism with acts of abuse or harassment. However, it doesn’t need to involve violent or intimidating behavior. Take racial name-calling and jokes. Or consider situations when people may be excluded from groups or activities because of where they come from. Racism can be revealed through people’s actions as well as their attitudes. It can also be reflected in systems and institutions. But sometime...